

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
131 Cambridge Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
(617) 523-7664

June 7, 1977

Dear

I spoke with some of you by phone today, and am taking this opportunity to reach the others concerned via mail.

It has been suggested that an interfaith memorial service to be held during Gay Pride Week might be particularly appropriate this year, in light of still another fire with the loss of many gay lives.

As you are all probably aware, the first thought of an interfaith memorial service during Gay Pride Week came about because of the fire in 1973 in a gay bar in New Orleans, in which 9 people were killed. Of course, in addition to those lives lost, there were the 250,000 killed in the holocaust in Germany during the Hitler years. And now, there is the fire at Everard's in New York with the attendant loss of another 9 lives.

While most of our organizations have not been in touch regularly, some of us are long-time coworkers, and have many occasions to sit down together and discuss common goals and needs -- and often, common problems. For those whom we do not see as often this is a good occasion for us to become acquainted and to work toward meeting a need which has been felt in our community -- a need for a memorial service.

Therefore, I am taking the liberty of inviting you to join us for supper (dutch) at Salad Days, on Charles Street at 6:00 p.m. on June 16th to discuss an interfaith service. I have taken the liberty of scheduling the service at Old West Church (M.C.C.'s home) since it is much easier for us to obtain the sanctuary there than elsewhere -- and probably less expensive for us all. We have scheduled the time for 8:00 p.m., allowing people to have dinner and then have sufficient time to get to the church.

The organizations to be involved are Am Tikvah (the gay Jewish group), Dignity, Integrity, Evangelicals Concerned, Lutherans Concerned, and Metropolitan Community Church. If you know of some other gay religious organization whom we have inadvertently overlooked, please call it to our attention, since we do not wish to exclude any group.

Also, in the interest of peace, harmony, sisterly love and interfaith charity, we are asking two things:

1. Suggestions for the service are to be desexed (not emasculated!) wherever possible. In other words: Terms for addressing God should avoid "Father", "King", and other masculine generic terms insofar as is possible. Terms for humanity should not be phrased as mankind, and people not addressed as brothers exclusively. Many of our organizations have made a commitment to using inclusive terminology and do not wish at this time to abrogate that commitment.
2. There will be no communion (Eucharist, Lord's Supper), since this seems to be an area where agreement is hardest to come by.

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A third thought occurs to me:

3. Common prayers -- that is, prayers where the general congregation is to join in should not be addressed to Jesus, but to the Creator God whom we all share, nor should the ending of the prayer be "in Jesus' name," or "for Jesus' sake", etc., in order not to exclude our Jewish brothers and sisters. However, the prayers offered by an individual may well end that way, since each will be praying as he or she is accustomed to pray.

I realize that for many people any or all of these areas may be touchy, but the world is not the easy place it once was, and we have all had to learn to conciliate and reconcile in many ways. It seems to go with the business we all share! I mention them in advance so that our thinking as we plan may be along lines that will take these into consideration, and there will be less of a problem when we sit down to put the service together.

I would appreciate if you would each bring with you a plan for a simple memorial service, including any litany, prayers, scripture, hymns (xerox copies, please), etc., which we may cut and piece together to make a service which truly reflects us all. Hopefully, it will not be a "hodge-podge", but a truly interfaith service which all of our members may enter into, feel comfortable with, and come away feeling that they have truly worshipped and been refreshed. If it works, we will all be that much more mature for having planned it.

Metropolitan Community Church will take responsibility for preparing a bulletin. If you would like to have your group's meeting time and place listed in that bulletin, please bring the time and address along with you, so that we can print it. We would like you also to suggest to your members that some of them act as co-hosts, ushers, greeters, etc.

If there is an offering to be taken, may I suggest that it be sent to the Everard Fire Fund, since they are in the position of having to bury 2 of the fire victims and cremate a Polish immigrant, in order to send his ashes home. Each of these are costly items and money is currently being raised for that purpose by M.C.C. New York, which has been handling the matter with the help of the Interreligious Gay Council (our counterpart) in New York.

I am enclosing a list of the people currently being used as contact people by this non-organization, so that we can reach each other should we need to in order to facilitate planning. I hope none of you are offended by the sharing of your address and/or phone number.

Please call me at 524-1727 (leave a message if possible) after 3:00 p.m. and let me know if you are going to be at Salad Days on the 16th. I look forward to meeting some of you and seeing others again.

In commonality,

Marge Ragona, Exhorter
Metropolitan Community Church

CONGREGATION בית שמיחת תורה BETH SIMCHAT TORAH

Participants in the May 1, 1976 GAY RELIGIOUS COUNCIL

Next meeting: May 18, 1976 Metropolitan Community Church 13th St. & 7th Ave.
7:30 pm

Barrett L. Brick (Beth Simchat Torah)	520 West 122 St., NYC 10027	666-8814
Rev. Jose L. Mojica (MCC/Hispana)	51-22 48th St., Woodside, NY 11377	786-5163
Fr. Leo M. Joseph (Beloved Disciple)	324 West 14 St., NYC 10014	242-2447
Creighton Clarke Raoul Cleveland (Dignity/NY)	240 Baltic St., Brooklyn, NY 11201	624-4429
Gilbert H. Lincoln (MCC/NY)	116 Pinehurst Ave., NYC 10033	781-8113
Marge Ragona (MCC/Westchester)	435 East 9 St., NYC 10009	691-7428 923-3023
Hugh R. Bruce (MCC/NY)	105 Lincoln Rd., Brooklyn, NY 11225	469-5861
James Jarman (MCC/NY)	252 West 17 St., NYC 10011	989-8696
Bro. Chuck David (Integrity)	160 West 71 St., NYC 10023	362-9254
David Krause (Beth Simchat Torah)	25 Parade Place, Brooklyn, NY 11226	284-0812
Bishop Robert M. Clement (Beloved Disciple)	348 West 14 St., NYC, 10014	242-6616

Services & Oneg Shabbat every Friday at 8:15 pm-151 Bank Street, NYC-Phone 212-255-2599

Mailing address: PO Box 1270 GPO-NEW YORK, NY 10001

Interfaith Religious Group

Integrity

Bill Doubleday
45 Garden Street
Boston 723-4336

Luth. Concerned

Ken West Hassel
96 Hemmway Street
Boston 536-3788

Dignity

102 Charles St.
Box 172
Boston, Mass 02114

Ed LeBlanc -
Marge Rucker

Evangelicals Concerned

(872 Mass. Avenue
Cambridge, Mass.
Apt 202)

Reese Hiles &/or
Dick Wattson

40 Manning Rd.
Waltham, Mass.

Amy Tikvah

Lori Saegman
44 Garland St.
J. P. 524.1890

Lori Saegman

Marge Razona

MCC
44 Garland St.
J. P. 524-1727

